COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

DEFENDER

Volume 3, Issue 1

Spring 2018

JORDIE BELLAIRE: COMICS ARE FOR EVERYBODY

CENSORSHIP IN JAPAN

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

"Comics Are for Everybody." That simple but powerful slogan from this issue's interview subject Jordie Bellaire speaks directly to why CBLDF's work protecting free expression matters.

Comics is a big-tent medium that encompasses a wide range of viewpoints, attitudes, and identities. It can tackle subject matter ranging from the frivolous to the deadly serious, and it can speak to the youngest child and to the most seasoned senior. That's why it's important for CBLDF to stand up for comics when people use their individual viewpoint to try to censor other people's access to material, something we've seen with books as mainstream as Raina Telgemeier's *Drama*, Neil Gaiman and P. Craig Russell's *The Graveyard Book*, and even Congressman John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell's *March*. Comics are for everybody, but not every comic is right for every person. If you don't like it, don't read it. But let other people make up their own minds.

Comics are for everybody both as readers and as creators. This issue shares stories about how creators around the globe use the medium to express themselves. On page 7, you'll meet Ramón Esono Ebalé, a cartoonist from Equatorial Guinea jailed for his creative work. In Japan, Takeshi Nogami illustrates the popular series *Girls Und Panzer* and speaks out for manga. Learn more about his efforts to support free speech, starting on page 10. Among the most influential creators working in English, Jordie Bellaire sat with us to speak about her activism and creativity, starting on page 8. Finally, on page 13, we look back on the life of Mort Walker, whose strip *Beetle Bailey* ruffled the feathers of military censors and newspaper editors.

Comics are powerful because they speak broadly and invite all of us who enjoy the medium to have a place in it. On page 14, we talk to Wayne Winsett of Time Warp Comics about being a vital part of the community. You'll also see how CBLDF is advocating for the legal rights comics depends upon, with our most recent legal activity spotlighted on pages 4 and 5. While these cases may involve prose novels, video games, and paintings, the legal issues involved have repercussions on the creativity of the comics medium, which is why we joined these important coalition efforts.

As we move into the spring convention season, join us in celebrating the wide range of expression comics makes possible. Comics is for all of us, let's all do our part to make it even better!

—Charles Brownstein, Executive Director

CBLDF thanks our Guardian Members:

Grant Geissman, Philip Harvey, and Shadowline Comics

CBLDF's education program made possible with the generous support of the Gaiman Foundation and supporters like you!

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of the First Amendment rights of the comics art form and its community of retailers, creators, publishers, librarians, educators, and readers. CBLDF provides legal referrals, representation, advice, assistance, and education in furtherance of these goals.

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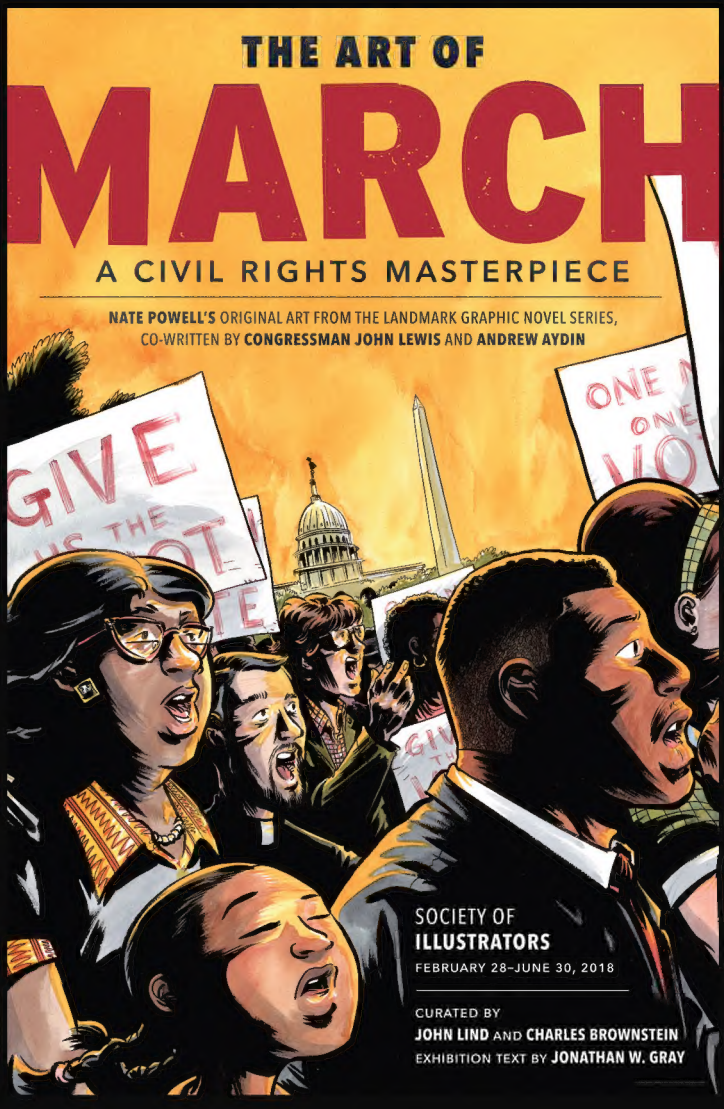
CELEBRATING A CIVIL RIGHTS MASTERPIECE

CBLDF's Charles Brownstein teamed up with John Lind (Creative Director, Kitchen Sink Books, an imprint of Dark Horse Comics) to co-curate *The Art of MARCH: A Civil Rights Masterpiece*, an exhibit at the Society of Illustrators, February 28–June 30, 2018.



The Art of MARCH: A Civil Rights Masterpiece walks visitors through the story of Congressman John Lewis's experience in the civil rights movement as depicted by the pen of *March* trilogy illustrator Nate Powell. This landmark exhibition of Congressman Lewis's celebrated graphic novel memoir, co-written with Andrew Aydin, takes visitors on a visceral tour of the civil rights movement, illuminating pivotal moments, people, and philosophies through the display of more than 150 pieces of original art, interactive materials, and new exhibition essays by Dr. Jonathan W. Gray, Associate Professor of English at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and author of *Civil Rights in the White Literary Imagination: Innocence by Association* (The University Press of Mississippi. 2013). Visitors will glimpse how this comics masterpiece was created, with behind-the-scenes process art and artifacts from the creative process. A portion of the exhibition also shows how Powell matured from an SVA student steeped in the punk zine culture to become the Eisner-winning illustrator of the most important political graphic novel of all time.

The Society of Illustrators will be organizing events open to the public in conjunction with the exhibit. A schedule of lectures, panels, tours, and workshops geared towards students and teachers, as well as the general public, will be announced in the coming weeks. More information on the exhibit and related events can be found at www.societyillustrators.org/exhibits/march.

The *March* trilogy has been recognized for its groundbreaking storytelling with numerous accolades. *March: Book One* became the first graphic novel to win a Robert F. Kennedy Book Award, *March: Book Two* and *March: Book Three* won Eisner Awards, *March: Book Three* is the first graphic novel to receive a National Book Award, and the trilogy has spent a combined 99 weeks on the *New York Times* Bestseller List. *March* is published by Top Shelf Productions, an imprint of IDW Publishing.

Despite its accolades, *March* has been challenged in schools and libraries, and CBLDF has been involved in its defense. CBLDF has prepared extensive resources for the trilogy, including teaching guides for each volume:

- *March: Book One:* http://cbldf.org/?p=16734
- *March: Book Two:* http://cbldf.org/?p=20910
- *March: Book Three:* http://cbldf.org/?p=31743

If you haven't read *March*, you can donate to CBLDF and get the slipcased edition of the trilogy signed by Aydin and Powell at https://tinyurl.com/ydd83d7u

IDW Founder & CEO Ted Adams Joins CBLDF Board of Directors

CBLDF is proud to welcome Ted Adams to its Board of Directors. As founder and CEO of IDW Media Holdings, Adams oversees one of the nation's leading comics publishing brands, whose dedication to developing new readers, preserving comics history, and providing avenues for important creative voices aligns with CBLDF's important work.

Ted Adams

Adams remarks, "The freedoms we have because of the First Amendment can only survive if everyone knows and understands their rights, and if we're willing to fight to keep them. I've long admired the work the CBLDF does to achieve those principles. My goal is to help the office team and Board continue to educate the comics community about their rights and to be there to defend those rights whenever and wherever necessary."

CBLDF President Larry Marder says, "Ted's dedication to free expression is matched only by his entrepreneurial zeal and prudent business acumen. Our career paths have crossed often, but never so meaningfully as they do now, when we join forces to advance CBLDF's important work!"

Adams joins Reginald Hudlin, the iconic writer, producer, and director behind *Marshall*, *Django Unchained*, *Black Panther* animated series, and more; three-time Newbery honoree Jennifer L. Holm; celebrated comics authors and executives Paul Levitz and Larry Marder; *Bone* creator Jeff Smith; industry leader Jeff Abraham, president of Penguin Random House Publisher Services; legendary IP litigator Dale Cendali, a partner at Kirkland & Ellis, LLP; ICv2 CEO Milton Griepp; Sequential Tart founder Katherine Keller; DCBS co-owner Christina Merkler; and Chris Powell, VP Retailer Services at Diamond.

CENSORSHIP SCORECARD

CBLDF joins coalition efforts to protect the freedom to read comics. Taking an active stand against all instances of censorship curbs precedent that could adversely affect the rights upon which comics readers depend. Here are a few of our latest cases...

Arizona

WIN: In 2013, CBLDF joined a Freedom to Read Foundation amicus brief opposed to Arizona's ethnic studies ban, which led to the dissolution of the Mexican American Studies program in Tucson. Judge A. Wallace Tashima has ruled in *Acosta et al v. Huppenthal* that the Arizona law targeting the program is unconstitutional and that the state cannot ban ethnic studies programs. Tashima issued a permanent injunction, which means that no part of the law may be enforced at this time.

Maryland

LOSS: CBLDF joined the Kids' Right to Read Project to call for the restoration of *BUCK: A Memoir* by M.K. Asante to Baltimore County School District classrooms. A single parent complained about out-of-context profanity and sexual content in the book during a biased televised report, and the district pulled it from classrooms, claiming it was not part of the approved curriculum. To date, there is no indication the book was restored.

Minnesota

LOSS: CBLDF joined KRRP to protest the removal of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* from required reading in the Duluth school district over the use of a racial slur. The district has not yet decided what books will replace them.

Texas

DEVELOPING: After CBLDF joined KRRP in protesting the removal of the critically-acclaimed young adult novel *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas pending review, the book was returned to high school library shelves in Katy, but students need parental permission to check it out. It could still be banned after evaluation by a review committee.

Wyoming

LOSS: CBLDF joined the defense of Tanya Stone's *A Bad Boy Can Be Good for a Girl* after it was challenged over sexual content at Cody High School. A review committee voted 7-2 to retain it, sending their decision to the school board. The board in turn voted 5-1 to remove the book. The district also voted to implement software that would inform parents of their children's library habits.

Utah Teacher Fired After Classical Art Lesson

An elementary school art teacher in Cache County, Utah, is fighting to clear his name after he was fired for inadvertently sharing two classical paintings of nudes by Amedeo Modigliani and François Boucher with a 6th grade class. Despite a police investigation that absolved him of wrongdoing, the Cache County School District said he was dismissed for allegedly belittling those who were uncomfortable with the partial nudity. Rueda had distributed a collection of 100 art postcards to students in order to have them look at color usage in various works. The card set from publisher Phaidon was already in the art classroom library, and he was unaware that a few of the works included partial nudity. Within a week after the fateful classroom lesson Rueda was given the choice of resigning or being fired. He is appealing his termination—not necessarily to get his job back, he says, but simply to clear his name

Turkish Courts Order 12 Anti-Erdogan Cartoons Removed from Twitter

In two separate rulings, lawyers for Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan have obtained court orders demanding that Twitter remove a total of 12 cartoons mocking him. Twitter has not yet taken action on the orders, which target 11 panels by Brazilian cartoonist Carlos Latuff and one by Dutch cartoonist Ruben Oppenheimer. Latuff and Oppenheimer received notification from Twitter that it had been court-ordered to remove their work. Both stated that they have no intention of voluntarily removing their work from Twitter.

Eaten Fish Receives Refuge in Europe

The Iranian refugee cartoonist known as Eaten Fish, who has spent an excruciating four years suffering from mental health issues in Australia's offshore immigration detention facility on Manus Island, has finally been granted refuge in an unidentified northern European city. The International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN) arranged a two-year artist's residency for him there, with the hope that he will receive permanent asylum. After finally reaching his new home, Eaten Fish issued a brief statement via ICORN:

> I have left PNG. It was a long journey but I am safe now. I am thinking about my friends in Manus Island and Port Moresby. Thank you to my supporters and people who worked to make this journey happen.

Find out more about these stories and get the latest news every day at http://cbldf.org!

CBLDF JOINS AMICUS BRIEFS IN SUPPORT OF CONGRESSIONAL ART CONTEST WINNER, *GRAND THEFT AUTO V*

CBLDF joined with a diverse group of nonprofits advocating for free expression and the arts in filing an amicus brief with the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. The brief is in support of Missouri representative William Clay and David Pulphus, an artist who is Clay's constituent, appealing the court's decision to support Architect of the Capitol Stephen T. Ayers, who removed Pulphus' contest-winning artwork from the wall of the Cannon Tunnel due to political viewpoint pressure. The amicus brief argues that the contest is not government speech, but a "limited purpose public forum," and that the ruling of the contest as government speech "was [a] fundamental error, because the government is not 'speaking' when it creates and hosts an art competition to showcase the speech of its citizens."

Learn more at http://cbldf.org/?p=33185

CBLDF also filed an amicus brief alongside nine other media organizations, asking the New York Court of Appeals to reject actress Lindsey Lohan's and former *Mob Wives* star Karen Gravano's invitation to expand the state's right of publicity law by broadening New York Civil Rights Law Section 51. The brief states that the "plaintiffs' proposed reading of this state's privacy statute would have a profoundly chilling effect on free speech." That reading would endanger a wide range of comics, including works of nonfiction, fiction, and satire. Lohan and Gravano's lawsuits against Take Two Interactive claimed that their likeness and personas were used to create fictional characters in the popular video game *Grand Theft Auto V*, which violated their right to privacy. They are appealing a unanimous Manhattan Appellate Division dismissal of both lawsuits. The ruling said both "must fail because defendants did not use [plaintiffs'] 'name, portrait, or picture.'"

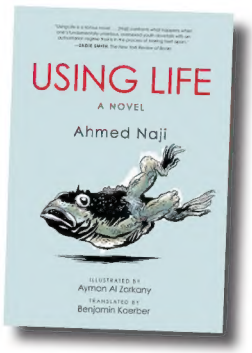
Learn more at http://cbldf.org/?p=33141

DOUBLE JEOPARDY

Even with an acquittal or victorious appeal, in some parts of the world, creators are facing down the same charges over and over.

Ahmed Naji to Face Third Trial for Book Excerpt

Egyptian novelist Ahmed Naji will be tried a third time for "harming public morality" with an excerpt from his book *Using Life*, which was printed in *Akhbar al-Adab* newspaper in 2014. Naji was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison last year; he served 10 months of the sentence before his conviction was vacated and a retrial ordered.



Using Life is an experimental work that incorporates visual elements, including comics drawn by Ayman al-Zorkany. The book's protagonist, Bassam, is a young man living in a fictionalized Cairo that has been reshaped by a series of natural disasters. (An English-language edition is available from University of Texas Press.)

The criminal charge against Naji came after a 65-year-old reader claimed that the excerpt caused him to have heart palpitations, a drop in blood pressure, and severe illness because of its references to sex and drug use. The author was initially acquitted in January 2016, but a prosecution appeal resulted in a fine and the maximum prison sentence.

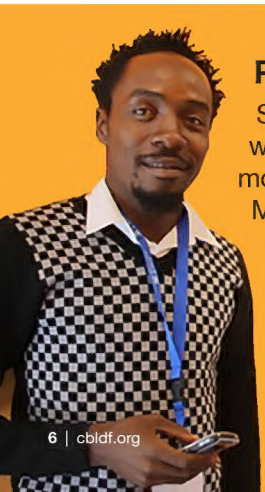
Although Naji was released from prison in December 2016 pending retrial, last July he was informed that he is currently banned from traveling outside of Egypt "on the basis of a decision by the Attorney General."

Indian Political Cartoonist Faces New Charges

Five years ago, Aseem Trivedi dodged a bullet when sedition charges against the political cartoonist were dropped. But that bullet has come back around: new charges have been brought against the outspoken artist.

In 2012, Trivedi was arrested for sedition and insulting national symbols for cartoons critical of government corruption that he shared on his website Cartoons Against Corruption. He was charged under Section 124 (A) of the Indian Penal Code, which is frequently used to crack down on dissident speech. The charges were eventually dropped. Trivedi also won an important victory for free expression before the Bombay High Court, which ruled in 2015 that mere criticism of the government does not count as sedition after he challenged his arrest.

However, in November, authorities informed Trivedi that charges had been filed against him once again. Coincidentally (or perhaps not coincidentally), Trivedi spoke about the continued use of Section 124 (A) to charge dissenters with sedition with Australia's national broadcaster shortly before the renewed charges.



Political Cartoonist Held Without Charge in Equatorial Guinea

Several months ago, graphic novelist and political cartoonist Ramón Esono Ebalé was arrested in his native country of Equatorial Guinea. Although the arrest was almost certainly in retaliation for his work critical of dictator Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, he has yet to be charged with any crime.

Nicaraguan cartoonist Pedro X. Molina created a comic to tell Ebalé's story, as well as a strip illustrating Ebalé's response to the international support he has received. Molina has graciously given us permission to reprint the cartoons, so read on and spread the word about the illegal detention of Ramón Esono Ebalé!

To view more of Molina's work, follow @pxmolina on Twitter and Facebook, and visit www.pxmolina.com

THIS IS RAMÓN ESONO, A CARTOONIST FROM EQUATORIAL GUINEA ...

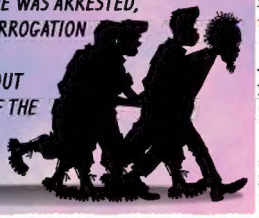
https://twitter.com/pxmolina
www.pxmolina.com

AMONG OTHER THINGS, RAMÓN WITH THE HELP OF A COUPLE OF WRITERS CREATED A GRAPHIC NOVEL TITLED "OBI'S NIGHTMARE" A FICTIONAL STORY WHERE THE (DICTATOR) PRESIDENT OF HIS COUNTRY (TEODORO OBIANG) IN POWER SINCE 1979, WAKES UP ONE DAY AND HE HAS BEEN TURNED INTO AN ORDINARY EQUATORIAL GUINEAN ...

... AN INGENIOUS SATIRE ABOUT THE REGIME RULING HIS COUNTRY.
EQUATORIAL GUINEANS IN EXILE AND EVEN WITHIN THEIR COUNTRY, LITTLE BY LITTLE STARTED SHARING THE BOOK...

...A FEW MONTHS AGO, RAMÓN, WHO WAS LIVING ABROAD, SAW HIMSELF FORCED TO RETURN TO HIS COUNTRY TO RENEW HIS PASSPORT AND OTHER DOCUMENTS...

...ONCE THERE, HE WAS ARRESTED, AND IN THE INTERROGATION PROCESS HE WAS QUESTIONED ABOUT HIS CARTOONS OF THE GOVERNMENT...



... HE WAS PUT IN JAIL VIOLATING ALL LEGAL PROCEDURES, LATER THEY ACCUSED HIM OF A NON CARTOON RELATED CRIME, WHICH ACCORDING TO RAMON'S RELATIVES COULDN'T BE MORE RIDICULOUS (APPARENTLY THE REGIME WAS TOO EMBARRASSED TO ADMIT THEY WERE PUTTING HIM IN JAIL FOR SOME FUNNY DRAWINGS, SO THEY MADE UP OTHER CHARGES AGAINST HIM) ...

... AND NOW HE'S IN JAIL WAITING FOR ONE OF THOSE TRIALS IN IN WHICH THE SCALES OF JUSTICE INCLINES TO THE SIDE OF THE DICTATOR...

...WITH THIS ACTION THE REGIME SEEKS TO SILENCE THE VOICES OF ITS CRITICS, BUT OH SURPRISE! THE RESULT OF THIS ABUSE AGAINST RAMÓN IS THAT MANY MORE PEOPLE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE EQUATORIAL GUINEA KNOW ABOUT THIS DICTATORSHIP...

...PEOPLE LIKE MAYBE YOU, WHO, BEFORE THESE EVENTS, WEREN'T EVEN AWARE OF A COUNTRY NAMED EQUATORIAL GUINEA, NOW KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING THERE...

... BECAUSE DICTATORSHIPS MAY HAVE POWER, BUT THEY LACK INTELLIGENCE ...

... THIS IS WHY WE MUST DENOUNCE CASES LIKE THESE ALL AROUND THE WORLD AND DEFEND FREE SPEECH WHERE WE LIVE, TO ACHIEVE AND PRESERVE FREEDOM, CRITICISM AND HUMOR IN THIS WORLD SO NEEDY OF ALL OF THEM.

FROM BLACK BEACH PRISON IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA...

"HELLO EVERYONE: IN MY NAME AND THAT OF MY FAMILY, I WANT TO THANK ALL THOSE CARRYING ON THE FIGHT, HOPING I AM FREED FROM THIS SITUATION IN WHICH I DON'T BELONG. I DON'T BELONG ANYWHERE EXCEPT WHERE AN INDIVIDUAL IS FREE AND RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS. HOWEVER, THOSE IN POWER HAVE DECIDED NOT TO ADMIT REASON, WHEN REASONING, AFTER ALL, WOULD REQUIRE THE GENERAL PROGRESS OF WHICH THEY BRAG TO UNFOLD ACCORDING TO A BETTER RHYTHM. MY HOPES ARE STILL SET ON PRESENTING #218EMPIRE IN VIENNA, AS PLANNED, AND ON FULFILLING THE NATIONAL DREAM OF BEING AT THE LEVEL OF OTHER NATIONS WITH THE ONLY THING I'M GOOD AT: DRAWING. I WILL NOT GIVE UP. I WASN'T BORN WITH THE WORLD BENEATH MY FEET. I WAS BORN FOR MY MOTHER'S HAPPINESS. AND TODAY I LIVE TO REPRESENT MY PEOPLE WITH MY DRAWING. THANK YOU."
RAMÓN NSÉ ESONO EBALÉ.

Excerpt from *Redlands*.
(By Vanesa R. Del Rey and Jordie Bellaire. Published by Image Comics. Used with permission.)

JORDIE BELLAIRE:

COLORIST, WRITER, ADVOCATE

As a colorist, Jordie Bellaire has helped set the tone for innumerable series, from superheroes to creator-owned work. The two-time Eisner winner is also committed to fighting for the recognition of colorists and defending free expression. We caught a quick moment with her to talk about her work and censorship. *Interview by Betsy Gomez*

Marie Severin's work as a colorist helped define the look of EC Comics in the early 1950s, but many of the comics she colored were targeted by anti-comics crusader Fredric Wertham and the Comics Code. Who are some of the colorists who inspire you, and what are some ways in which colorists contribute to free expression in the medium?

There are many colorists today that inspire me, either with their work, work ethic, or for lack of a better word, attitude. That list includes people like Matt Wilson, Tamra Bonvillain, Kelly Fitzpatrick, Dave Stewart, Laura Allred, Bettie Breitweiser, Nick Filardi, Rico Renzi, Chris O'Halloran—I could really just go on and on.

The problem with colorists today is that there really are so many of us now, and we're all so different and unique from one another with individual creative voices. There's a lot to choose from. (I guarantee I missed a favorite, and I'm going to feel horrible when I read this later.)

I mentioned that colorists are all unique and have their own creative voices; with comics and their colorists, you really can get a solid book that comes together through the work of a great and mindful colorist. Colorists aren't just Photoshop monkeys or filling in the color by number, they are making conscious decisions about how to manipulate and manage the reader through their emotions and context of the story. That can be a powerful job and one that dictates the mood of any book. That's a colorist's real power.

You're an Eisner-winning colorist, and you've worn the mantle of writer, recently with *Redlands*, illustrated by Vanesa R. Del Rey. How do the modes of storytelling — coloring and writing — compare?

Thankfully, I'm also coloring *Redlands*, so a lot of the writing I do on *Redlands* is going to be reinforced by ideas I can push further with colors. Vanesa, Clayton Cowles (our letterer), and Becca Carey (our designer) really bring that book to life such that it feels like part of my job as writer is just to sit back and let them do the magic.

Writing is difficult and it's a lot scarier than coloring in the sense that if the book fails, it will fall on me, the writer. I don't think a colorist feels that amount of responsibility if a book doesn't perform well. Your soul is definitely in the pages as a writer, you're letting your imagination fly and sharing it with readers. It's incredibly vulnerable and strange, and I have to say. At some times I feel quite selfish putting out a story I've written for others to read—because who the heck am I? But that's what makes comics so interesting and beautiful because once you have so many people attached to the story—the artist, the letterer, the designer—it isn't just my story. It's all of us out there presenting something and giving to readers

something we want to say or express.

You are an outspoken advocate for the recognition of colorists as comics professionals and artists. How has the perception of colorists changed over the course of your career?

In the time that I've been coloring, since about 2011, colorists have received credit by name on trades and comics, been granted royalties and other rewards from big publishers, and been included on more solicits. The hard work isn't over though. It's important that all reviewers, solicits, and teams remember that comics are not usually just a two-person show.

Crediting the designers, the letterers, the artists, writers, and colorists will go a long way in building teams and recognition for those creators. Also, comics are just a hard game, it takes a lot of time for each cog in the wheel to do their part, so it's really down to just respecting the hard work that has been done, just respecting the person who did it—it takes two seconds.

From *They're Not Like Us.*
(By Eric Stephenson, Simon Gane, and Jordie Bellaire. Published by Image Comics. Used with permission.)

More than anything, I'd like to speak more for seeing more women, PoC, and other marginalized communities getting their chance at writing, drawing, coloring, editing, etc. Comics have been pretty much the dead same (with the exception of Image's impact in the last ten years or so) for the last however many decades. I'm really excited by the creative shift that's currently happening. We're seeing more variety in titles and creators—it couldn't be a better time to see what else we can bring to comics.

You and Steven Finch created "Comics Are for Everybody" merchandise to help CBLDF with fundraising. What was the inspiration behind the initiative?

We created "Comics Are for Everybody" as a response to a time where I felt that "nerd girls" and "fake geek girls" were being inappropriately pushed out of comics through slogans on shirts and harassment at conventions and online. When we started "Comics Are for Everybody" it was only meant to be a positive mantra to remind everybody this really is for everybody! Why would we try to exclude anyone? It just didn't add up to me. The industry will be better for more inclusion, more diversity. We had the shirts produced through Diesel Sweeties for the first run and then decided it would be something that spoke to Image's message too. Steven and I always knew we wanted zero proceeds of the "Comics Are for Everybody" merch, and Eric Stephenson suggested that CBLDF was a great organization to give the earnings to. With that, "Comics Are for Everybody" has its home with Image and CBLDF, which I hope has strengthened its message and reach.

Why is CBLDF's mission important to you personally?

I think art is important. I think sharing and discourse are important. I think education about art, history, and sharing and/or discussing those things are also important. CBLDF isn't always going to be the most popular kid in the class, but the message has always been clear and consistent. I respect the CBLDF greatly and admire that despite push back on certain issues, they stand their ground on what they are all about. I'm looking forward to what CBLDF will do in the coming years for education and further protection of art.

TAKESHI NOGAMI: DEFENDING MANGA

Last year, members of the international manga community found themselves on the defensive after BBC journalist Stacey Dooley broadcast "Young Sex for Sale in Japan," which advocated that Japan ban large swaths of erotic manga. Takeshi Nogami, artist of the popular *Girls Und Panzer* manga franchise, is familiar with these lines of attack and frequently speaks out in support of free expression in manga. He invited CBLDF Executive Director Charles Brownstein to his Tokyo studio last year to discuss the impact of the BBC documentary, censorship in Japan, and the best way to make historical comics. *Interview by Charles Brownstein. Translated by Dan Kanemitsu.*

Takeshi Nogami: I learned a lot from the interaction that I had with BBC's Dooley. For three hours, she sat right next to me, and no matter what I said, she was completely convinced that I was a scumbag. She was completely driven to try to convince me that my perspectives were invalid. I wanted to know how she came to think that I was so wrong. So, I asked her, "What is a human being?"

I asserted the opinion—possibly influenced by my Japanese or Buddhist kind of perspective—human beings are a mixture of both very good well-intentioned aspects, as well as elements that are marred in filthy aspects. We are a combination of both. She asserted in her counterpoint, that humans are pure righteous beings who are corrupted to fall from grace. She saw it as her role to point that out and to try to rectify people that have fallen from the righteous path. I was able to understand that our discussion reached an impasse because our conceptions of who we are, as human beings, would not be able to be resolved.

I first encountered your advocacy for free expression when Japan introduced new regulations affecting the sale of adult manga, and when CBLDF was defending American citizen Ryan Matheson against child pornography charges because Canada Customs found chibi art on his computer [see http://cbldf.org/?p=3554]. What are some of the lessons that you've learned in advocating for free expression?

There is a need for advocates of free speech. But at the same time, [while] advocacy is important, if you are a creator, trying to develop fans for your work is also very important. Reaching commercial success and encouraging a different set of perspectives in your work can be more persuasive than winning your opponents over through debate.

Personally, in Japan, I am of the mind that the otaku industry has finally come around to being able to have a mature dialogue with legislators and politicians about how [free speech] issues are very important, that manga is not an enemy but is something that can be a means for government to interact with constituents. That's one of the most important ways of countering calls for censorship that I think has been learned recently.

It takes a great deal of courage for a creative person to align themselves politically in any place. Even in the U.S., there are some creative people who are reluctant to put themselves out there for a free expression cause, even though they may privately hold such views. What is your advice to your fellow creators in terms of finding the courage to be public about free expression advocacy?

You really cannot do what you're not comfortable with. But it is important to keep in mind, and while this might sound a little banal, that if censorship and regulation proceeds to a certain degree, then your own work will not be economically viable anymore. Having said that, advocate for free speech how you feel comfortable. There's not just one way of being a free speech advocate.

When CBLDF was defending Matheson and Christopher Handley [see http://cbldf.org/?p=918], some people at manga conven-

Artwork by Takeshi Nogami.
(Courtesy of the artist.)

tions would say "sucks to be that guy" or "he shouldn't have had porn." How would you speak to fans about why free expression is relevant to their life?

Regardless of who is the messenger, it's not just going to hurt that guy, it's going to hurt everyone involved. There are many people, even within Japan, who say "I like manga, but I hate this adult stuff," or "I like this manga, but this is way too much gore for me." But often, people who are advocating for censorship are actually harboring personal aspirations or self-interests about other things. I think it's important to counter censorship viewpoints with our own self-interest to be able to read a wide range of material. My right to enjoy a wide range of material is valid as a counterpoint against your desire to shut this down.

Here, the advocacy that's conducted by CBLDF plays a very important part. I would be overjoyed if people would feel compelled to donate to CBLDF and other advocacy programs.

I am in your studio, and there's historical reference everywhere. I'm wondering, are there worlds you'd like to conquer creatively that you have not?

Right now I'm researching the American Civil War, and I'd to take that up next, possibly with an American audience in mind. There are certain themes that are taboo in Japanese fiction with regards to recent events in Japanese history that I'd like to pick up. For instance, Imperial Japan expanded into the Chinese mainland and basically cobbled together a nation, Manchuria. At the end of the war, many of the Japanese citizens who had immigrated there had to get the hell out very quickly. The chaos that ensued is something I'd like to take up in the future. Prior to like ten years ago, if you brought up the subject of the evacuation from Manchuria, many people, professional editors, would discourage me. Not only were the people that were left behind still alive, but the people that ditched these people were still alive. So, both sides, the victims and the perpetrators of the travesty, are now passing away, so it will be easier for me to pursue that subject matter.

What are the qualities of manga that make it so successful for addressing history?

I think the greatest attribute of historical period manga is that you can focus on the emotional aspects of the characters. It's easy for historical manga to fall prey to just following whatever actually happened, as if it were a text book. However, manga is not a very viable medium for presenting logic, but it is an extraordinarily useful means of presenting emotional thought processes. For example, consider Napoleon—manga is a very useful means of trying to reexamine the different emotions and thought processes that went through his mind. What are the different feelings he held over the course of his life? In manga, readers that are following Napoleon's sentiments can become his friends.

We were talking about research as a joy and as a black hole. How do you keep yourself from falling in that black hole?

Deadlines! [Laughter] I think manga artists should actually be novices of history, to a certain degree, and not go through too much research. My staff and I have arrived at the conclusion that if you're really familiar with a subject matter, it's almost an impediment to render it in the realm of manga. Allowing a manga author to pursue storylines or characters that don't follow conventional norms makes things a little more interesting.

CROSSING INTERNATIONAL BORDERS

Protect yourself when traveling! Ryan Matheson was arrested by Canadian authorities as he crossed into the country from the U.S. Fortunately, CBLDF was able to defend him, but authorities are still scrutinizing comics and electronic devices at border crossings. Arm yourself with these resources:

- ✓ CBLDF Advisory: Crossing International Borders: http://cbldf.org/?p=3508
- ✓ Legal Hazards of Crossing International Borders With Comic Art: https://tinyurl.com/7q7ffnl
- ✓ Pornographic Anime and Manga Under Canadian Law: https://tinyurl.com/y7rdz2z2
- ✓ Digital Privacy at the U.S. Border: Protecting the Data On Your Devices: https://tinyurl.com/hvtzzl9

If border agents stop you for comics, call CBLDF for help right away!
1-800-99-CBLDF • info@cbldf.org

Remembering Mort Walker

Mort Walker drew daily comic strips for 68 years, making him the longest-running syndicated cartoonist in history. Walker's prolific career saw the creation of nine different syndicated comic strips, including his most famous loafing protagonist, Beetle Bailey. Mainstream success, however, did not keep Walker safe from the censorship so many comics face. What sets Walker's story apart though, is how attempts to quiet him only increased his overall readership in the U.S. and around the world.

In the early 1950s, the Tokyo edition of *Stars & Stripes*, a U.S. military newspaper, dropped *Beetle Bailey* because they thought Beetle's lackadaisical attitude toward his superiors at the fictional Camp Swampy Army base encouraged disrespect of officers in the real world. Stateside media picked up the story, and the controversy gave *Beetle Bailey* its first large circulation boost. Regardless, *Stars & Stripes* would refuse to carry the strip for the next decade.

In 1970, Walker added a black character, Lt. Jack Flap, to the previously all-white strip. Though *Peanuts* had done the same thing two years prior, it was still very progressive for the time. Some Southern newspapers and, again, *Stars & Stripes*, dropped the strip, but a hundred others picked it up because of the inclusion of the new character.

Beetle Bailey was honored on a 44¢ U.S. postage stamp in 2010, the 60th anniversary of the strip.

Walker found fodder for storylines in some of the controversy. Feminist groups pointed out that jokes about General Halftrack lusting after his buxom secretary trivialized sexual harassment. Instead of writing Halftrack out, Walker sent him to sensitivity training, a modern solution that provided its own comedy.

Walker occasionally drew strips that he knew were too scandalous for syndication. He said he drew these just for himself, and they were placed in a black box at the bottom of a drawer. Eventually, these racy drawings found a home in Scandinavia and Norway, where *Beetle Bailey* was already very popular and readers were more comfortable with the overtly sexual nature and nudity these strips contained.

TR "Rocky" Shepard, former president of King Features Syndicate, a division of Hearst Entertainment that distributed *Beetle Bailey*, worked with Walker for more than 20 years. "Mort was an incredibly personable, compassionate man, a towering artistic talent the likes of which will not soon pass this way again," Shepard said of Walker. "He founded the International Museum of Cartoon Art with the help of his wife Catherine and has served for decades as a tireless advocate for cartoonists, the profession of cartooning and the important place in history and in our culture that the comics have played."

The museum launched 1974 in Greenwich, Connecticut. The collection grew to be worth more $20 million, but the museum itself had financial problems and shifted location multiple times until it closed in 2002. Luckily, in 2008, the roughly 200,000-piece collection was transferred to Ohio State University and is now housed at the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum.

Mort Walker's longevity came from his ability to change with the times and his commitment to the art form of comics. His legacy will live on, not just in his sons, who plan to continue his work, but in the cartoons and artwork he preserved.

by Patricia Mastricolo

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 23–25, 2018: WonderCon Anaheim
- Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA
- www.comic-con.org/wca

April 6–8, 2018: C2E2
- South Building, McCormick Place, Chicago, IL
- www.c2e2.com

April 7–8, 2018: MoCCA Arts Festival
- Metropolitan West, New York City, NY
- www.societyillustrators.org/mocca-arts-festival

Schedule subject to change. Visit cbldf.org for updates.

COMING SOON

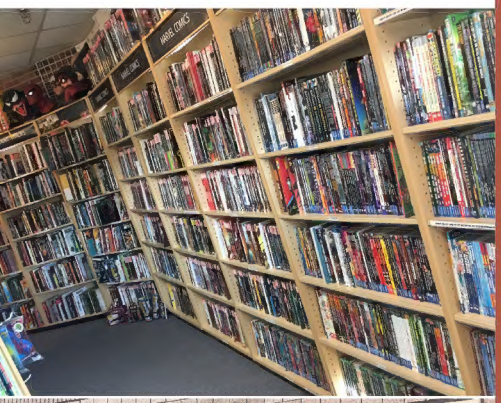
Defend Comics

Cover: Gene Luen Yang
Art: various

CBLDF's Free Comic Book Day 2018 offering features new all-ages content from some of today's most popular creators, including Jorge Aguirre and Rafael Rosado, Boya Sun and Kate Reed Petty, Emily Tetri, Drew Weing, and John Patrick Green! Look for it at your favorite local comic shop on May 5!

RETAILER MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Wayne Winsett, owner of Time Warp Comics in Boulder, Colorado, talks best practices, engaging communities, and why he supports CBLDF!



Time Warp was recognized by Diamond with the Best Practices Award for Best Graphic Novel Section. What are some best practices that you would recommend to other retailers? To librarians and educators who are developing comics collections for their students?

In relation to best practices for graphic novels, I really recommend listening to your customers for their needs and desires. I recommend greeting customers as they enter your store, and ask if there is anything you can help them find. With the amount of stock we have, it can be very overwhelming to regular customers and newbies alike, so it really helps to steer them in the right direction... I have sold graphic novels to libraries many times in the past, including stocking the University Of Colorado library. I think the key is to diversify and make sure they get a little of everything.

What are some ways in which you engage your community with comics?

We do a lot of advertising to get all ages of fans in here. We advertise to all the schools, especially the college and elementary schools. We do the standard FCBD and Halloween Comicfest, but also 24-Hour Comic Book Day. Any time we can entice a publisher, artist or writer to come, we try that. We also support and sponsor all the conventions that come around. Any time there are midnight releases or any events we can tie comics to, we do that as well.

Why is CBLDF's mission important to you?

CBLDF's mission is important to the whole country, as free speech is very important. We are lucky to live in Boulder, a very liberal community, so we haven't had any issues, but I sympathize with communities that don't have our sensibilities. In these strange political times, it is important to remain vigilant and aware. I want my fellow retailers to feel safe and express themselves through their stores personal identities. I renew every year, not for my sake particularly, but for everyone else, who might not be as lucky as we are.

To read the full interview, visit cbldf.org!

JOIN THE FIGHT!

We have membership plans for donors in every budget, and all of them are tax-deductible:

$100 Member Membership card, button assortment, sticker pack, pocket sketchbook, member patch, and EXCLUSIVE member-only t-shirt and print featuring art by Mike Allred!

$30 Associate Member Comes with membership card!

$50 Supporter Member Comes with membership card, button assortment, sticker pack, and pocket sketchbook!

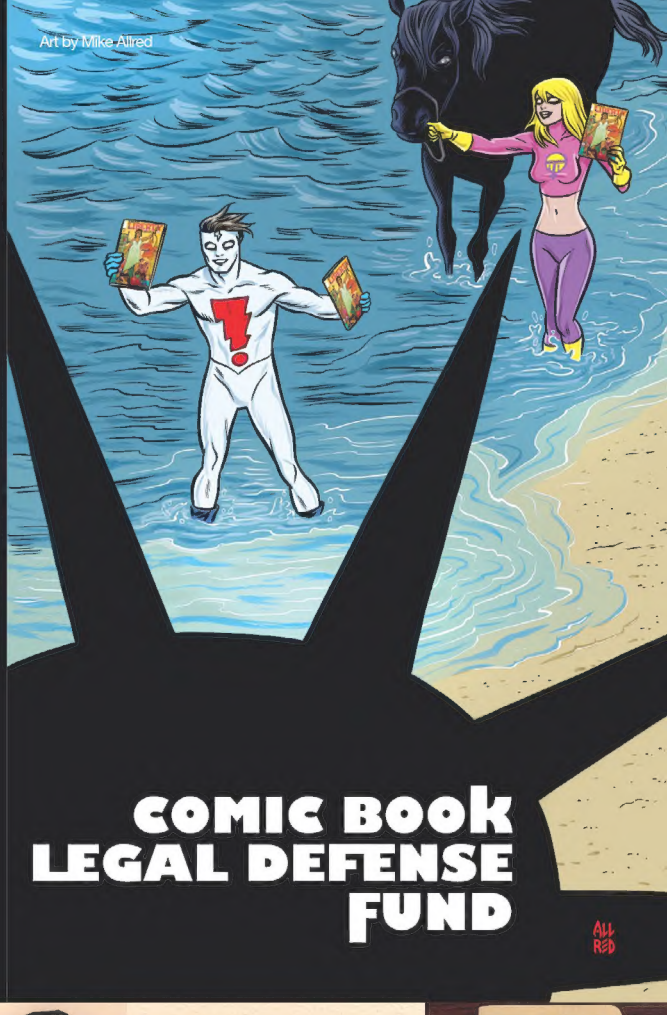
$250 Defender Member All of the above, plus a coffee mug, pullover hoodie, and signed Mike Allred print!

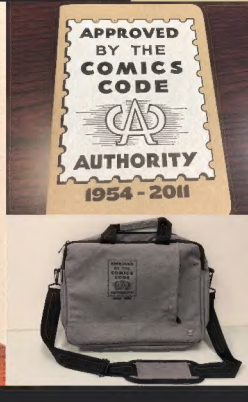
$500 Protector Member All of the above, plus the CBLDF-exclusive hardcover of Jack Kirby's *Challengers of the Unknown*!

$1,000 Champion Member All of the above, plus a messenger bag!

$2,500 Guardian Member All of the above, plus special recognition in select CBLDF publications throughout 2019!

Use the signup form on the back cover or visit http://cbldf.myshopify.com/collections/memberships to join today!





VISIT THE CBLDF REWARDS ZONE!

Comics' greatest creators support CBLDF by donating autographed graphic novels that you can get when you support our work. Visit the CBLDF Rewards Zone at https://cbldf.myshopify.com for books signed by **Neil Gaiman, Raina Telgemeier, Reginald Hudlin, Chris Claremont,** and more!

RADIO FREE COMIX!

A mix of interviews, panel recordings, and more, the CBLDF Podcast is a monthly event, from our keyboards to your ears. In the most recent episodes: **Sina Grace** (*Iceman*) and **R Sikoryak** (*The Unquotable Trump*)! The CBLDF Podcast is made possible in part by a donation from the Gaiman Foundation and member support.

Listen at http://cbldf.org/podcast

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